City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Application Number:	3014192
Applicant Name:	Amy Jain, Miller Hayashi Architects, for Seattle Public Schools
Address of Proposal:	3800 SW Findlay Street

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Land Use Application to expand an existing public school (Fairmount Park Elementary School) and to allow a 2-story, 19,122 sq. ft., 10-classroom addition in an environmentally critical area. Project includes demolition of two portable classrooms and a portion of the existing principal structure. Environmental documents have been prepared by Seattle Public Schools.

The following approval is required:

SEPA – For conditioning only - Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

SEPA DETERMINATION: [ ] Exempt [ ] DNS [ ] MDNS [X] EIS*

[ ] DNS with conditions

[ ] DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition, or another agency with jurisdiction.

*Environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools: Fairmount Park Elementary School Renovation and Addition, SEPA Addendum to Building Excellence Phase IV Capital Improvement Program Programmatic EIS (2012).

BACKGROUND DATA

Site Location

The existing Fairmount Elementary School is located on a 135,000 square-foot site in West Seattle, directly south of Fairmount Park, on SW Findlay Street, a half block east of Fauntleroy Way SW, a major arterial. The proposal is for renovations and additions to an existing school (presently vacant) and construction of a new 2-story, 10-classroom building east of the east wing of the existing elementary school building, within the existing site boundaries of the school. The school is addressed as 3800 SW Findlay Street.

Zoning

The proposal is located in a SF 5000 zone.

Proposal Information

Seattle Public Schools proposes to renovate an existing school building and construct a two-story, 19,200 square-foot addition east of the east wing of the existing building. The school building was originally constructed in 1964.

Public Comments

Notice of the proposed project was published on January 17, 2013, and the required pubic comment period ended on January 31, 2013. The comments received focused primarily on traffic and parking impacts within the immediate single-family neighborhood. Neighbors residing on either side of 38th Avenue SW have voiced particular concern regarding traffic impacts to that street, have rehearsed adverse incidents that had occurred before the school was closed in 2007, and have expressed worries about adverse traffic impacts associated with a doubling of the size of school enrollment.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental documents prepared by Seattle Public Schools: Fairmount Park Elementary School Renovation and Addition, SEPA Addendum to Building Excellence Phase IV Capital Improvement Program Programmatic EIS (2012), and in an environmental checklist dated January 17, 2013. The information in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant, project plans, and the experience of the review agency in reviewing similar projects form the basis for this analysis and decision.

Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) Section 25.05.660 provides that proposals can be conditioned or denied in order to mitigate environmental impacts. All conditions must be related to impacts identified in the environmental documents, based on adopted policies, and must be reasonable and capable of being accomplished. This proposal is reviewed under that substantive SEPA authority.

Disclosure of the potential environmental impacts from this project was made in the environmental document listed above. This information, supplemental information provided by the applicant (plans, written descriptions of the project, environmental documents), and the experience of this agency with review of similar projects form the basis for this analysis and conditioning.

The Overview Policy states in part, "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation (subject to some limitations)."

Under certain limitations/circumstances, (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority. The Overview Policy states in part: "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation" (subject to some limitations). Under certain limitations/circumstances (SMC 25.05.665 D 1-7) mitigation can be considered. Thus, a more detailed discussion of some of the impacts is appropriate.

Short - Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: decreased air quality due to suspended particulates from building activities and hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during grading, excavation, and general site work; increased traffic and demand for parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflicts with normal pedestrian and vehicular movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC 25.05.794). Although not significant, these impacts are adverse, and in some cases, mitigation is warranted.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, removal of debris, and obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way); the Building Code (construction measures in general); and the Noise Ordinance (construction noise). Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most of the short-term impacts to the environment.

Air Quality

Demolition, grading and construction activities each may create adverse air quality impacts in the surrounding area. The Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Seattle Stormwater, Grading and Pollution Control Ordinance regulate on-site grading activities and require that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of the work. Construction activities will include the following measures to minimize impacts to air quality:

Construction Noise

There will be excavation required to prepare the building site and foundation. Additionally, as development proceeds, noise associated with construction of the building could adversely affect the residential uses in the nearby residentially-zoned areas. To reduce the noise impact of construction on nearby residential properties, construction activities other than that taking place totally within enclosed floors will be limited to non-holiday weekdays between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM, and Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM. This mitigation, together with the limitations imposed of the Noise Ordinance; appear to be adequate to protect adjacent neighbors. No further conditioning under SEPA authority appears warranted.

Construction Vehicles

Existing City code (SMC 11.62) requires truck activities to use arterial streets to every extent possible. The proposal site located near one minor arterial (Fauntleroy Way SW.) and traffic impacts resulting from the truck traffic associated with construction activities will be of short duration and mitigated by enforcement of SMC 11.62.

City code (SMC 11.74) provides that material hauled in trucks not be spilled during transport. The City requires a minimum of one foot of "freeboard" (area from level of material to the top of the truck container) be provided in loaded uncovered trucks which minimizes the amount of spilled material and dust from the truck bed in route to or from a site. No further conditioning of the grading/excavation element of the project is warranted pursuant to SEPA policies.

Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated from the proposal: increased surface water runoff from greater site coverage by impervious surfaces; increased bulk and scale on the site; increased demand on public services and utilities; increased light and glare; loss of vegetation; and increased energy consumption. These long-term impacts are not considered significant because the impacts are minor in scope.

Most of the long-term impacts are typical of moderately-sized construction projects and will in part be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these are the Storm-water, Grading and Drainage Control Code (storm-water runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface), Land Use Code (height; setbacks; parking), and the Seattle Energy Code (long-term energy consumption).

Historic Preservation

The City of Seattle has determined that the preservation of historic buildings and districts is important to the citizenry for retention of a living sense and appreciation of the past, and has established the Landmarks Preservation Board to determine the historical and cultural significance of individual buildings and sites. A Landmark Nomination was prepared for Fairmount Park Elementary School (dated November 29, 2012) and subsequently submitted to the Board for its review and approval. The Board declined to grant landmark status to the existing school buildings or site.

Earth

Portions along the eastern edge of the site are mapped as an environmentally critical area (steep slope). A geotechnical investigation was performed at the project site by Shannon & Wilson, Inc. in November 2012. The study included geotechnical engineering recommendations for use in the design of foundations of the proposed addition on site. These recommendations have been incorporated into the plans for the Fairmount Park Elementary School renovations and addition and have been approved in DPD's ECA review of the project. Temporary erosion and sedimentation control BMPs and construction water treatment measures will be installed to minimize erosion and to treat stormwater runoff during construction. No further mitigation is necessary or warranted.

Traffic Impacts

The addition to Fairmount Park Elementary School is expected to increase the school's enrollment capacity by about 190 students to a total of about 490 students. When closed at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, 157 students were enrolled at the school.

Technical information regarding traffic impacts and projected for the school's re-opening in 2014 has been included in a Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by Heffron Transportation, Inc. dated November 14, 2012 and updated on December 14, 2012. Additional information is provided in a Heffron response to a DPD Correction Notice, dated April 5, 2013.

Plans approved by DPD, with a curb cut expanded from 25 feet to 30 feet at the western terminus of the on-site bus lane, show the construction of a new school bus driveway with an access point near the east end of SW Findlay Street. School buses would enter onto the on-site driveway at that point, load and dislodge students from the driveway, and exit to SW Findlay near the alley. The north curb of SW Findlay would be expected to be used for parent-vehicle loading and unloading.

At its proposed enrollment capacity, the school is projected to generate 630 trips per day, with 221 trips in the morning peak hour, and 137 trips in the afternoon peak hour. The afternoon peak hour occurs as students are dismissed from school; this is earlier than the typical afternoon commuter peak hour. The reopening and expansion of the school is expected to result in

congested traffic conditions in the morning before school begins and again in the afternoon when school is dismissed. Due to the limited amount of on-site queuing space both for school buses and parents' vehicles, and due to the limited number of choices for arriving at the site, morning and afternoon hours are expected to be very congested with the school operating at its increased capacity. It is also unlikely that there will be adequate space for the parking of parent vehicles, especially in the afternoon, when, unlike morning dropoff times when parents leave once the dropoff is completed, parents will park and await for their children's dismissals. The competition for nearby parking spots will undoubtedly be a cause for illegal parking, congestion, and increase opportunities for conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular travel in the area of the school.

Depending on staffing levels, the time of day, the number of parent volunteers and other conceivable factors, peak demand for parking spaces (the school has no possibility of expanding the number of on-site spaces beyond 35), will have to accommodated by overflow to a limited nearby on-street capacity.

In light of these clear traffic impacts, and in order to provide for mitigation, the proposal to renovate and expand Fairmount Park Elementary School has been conditioned, as noted below.

DECISION - SEPA

The application is **CONDITIONALLY GRANTED**.

CONDITIONS - SEPA

During Demolition and Construction

1. Hours of construction activities shall be limited to the following hours: from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM on non-holiday weekdays, and from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM on Saturdays. No construction related activities shall be allowed on Sundays. Any modification of allowable construction hours must have approval at least three days in advance from the Land Use Planner (Michael Dorcy, 206-615-1393).

Prior to Issuance of Any Certificate of Occupancy

2. The bus drop-off lane shall be provided with clear signage indicating one-way access from the east and exiting at the west and signed for "school buses only."

3. Seattle Public Schools shall work with SDOT to provide curb painting and additional signage at the south end (SW Findlay Street intersection) of the alley bordering the west side of the school property, in order to prevent vehicles blocking the upper end of the alley.

4. Seattle Public Schools shall work with SDOT to provide additional crosswalk improvements, including companion ramps on the south side of SW Findlay Street and at both sides of 38th Avenue SW.

5. The applicant, Seattle Public Schools, shall explore with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) options for signalization upgrades and improvements at the Fauntleroy Way SW/ SW Findlay Street intersection; should the signal upgrades be deemed unwarranted, Seattle Public Schools shall work with SDOT to install flashing beacons warning of the potential presence of children and required reduced vehicle speeds along Fauntleroy Way SW on either side of the SW Findlay Street intersection.

6. Seattle Public Schools shall work with SDOT and the City of Seattle Parks and Recreation Department to explore options for off-site bus loading along Fauntleroy Way SW should future school programs necessitate more than five full-size school buses to provide transportation at one time.

7. The applicant shall develop a "Fairmount Park Elementary School Traffic Management Plan". This Plan will include recommendations for parent vehicular access and egress from Fauntleroy Way SW, avoiding 38th Avenue SW, and use of the parent drop-off zone on the north side of SW Findlay Street. The Plan shall provide information regarding legal on-street parking spaces, including required clear distances from driveways, intersections, and other roadway features. The Plan shall provide the phone number and e-mail contact of the school office or responsible school official for neighbors to contact with traffic concerns. The Traffic Management Plan will be available on the school website and will be provided to all families at the beginning of the school year, and to all new families enrolling during the school year. Copies of the Plan shall be made available to neighbors of the school upon request.

For the Life of the Project

8. Seattle Public Schools, faculty and staff, and parent organizations at Fairmount Park Elementary School shall work on programs to reduce parent vehicle traffic at the site to the maximum extent possible, including exploration and implementation of the following: staggering release times, designating walk-to-school days, encouraging students and parents to walk or carpool, implementing a "Walking Bus program," and implementing a "Green Ribbon" program where parents and students are recognized for reducing vehicular trips to and from the school. This information shall be incorporated into the Traffic Management Plan identified in Condition #7, above.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: May 30, 2013
Michael Dorcy, Senior Land Use Planner
Department of Planning and Development

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